

Full Length Research Paper

Globalisation and Ebola disease: Implications for business activities in Nigeria

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With the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa, it is expected that whatever the transmitting cause and spread of the virus, it has affected the economic, political and socio- economy activities with an immense strain on the health sector. The scope of this study is the most populous nation in Africa, Nigeria. The quantitative method adopted provided results from questionnaires, which were analysed and resulted in providing the underlined significant role of globalisation in the development of Nigeria business activities and socio-psychological impact of the epidemic virus on globalisation. This is in line with the cross-border spread of the disease in generating bi-lateral strain amongst the affected countries, thus been envisioned from the spread of Ebola Virus. In the course of the paper, epidemics of such degrees in the past were reviewed by looking at how they surfaced, resurfaced and combated. The paper stresses on the role of globalisation in spreading, maintaining and eliminating the virus and its socio-economic implications in Nigeria and her related activities. This paper concludes that Nigerians are aware of the socio-economic benefits and ills of globalisation and they are convinced that the country had been impacted by it. Notably, disasters are proposed to be preventable with adequate systemized agency who will be saddled with epidemic control in Nigeria, resulting in a continuous notable success rather than having a haphazard control mechanism with business activities in negativity aside its disruption.

Key words: Globalization, ebola epidemic virus, socio-economic implication, health sector, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity has always faced epidemic diseases war and won, though the price is costly unless early averted. The cost is in reference to lives lost, money spent, family displaced and much more that occur (Kothari, 2002). Kothari (2002) posited that when the outbreaks occur, skedaddle for survival among the people causes them to flee the area. In the midst of these, the likelihood of an infected person(s) fleeing to other communities leads to

the continuous spread (Kothari, 2002). Such was the case of the AIDS virus as analysed by the Poundstone et al. (2004).

It is an established fact, that the case of socio-epidemiology can be attributed to virus infection distribution where the epidemiology triangle was formed involving three major players namely the host, the agents and the environment. These three are actively

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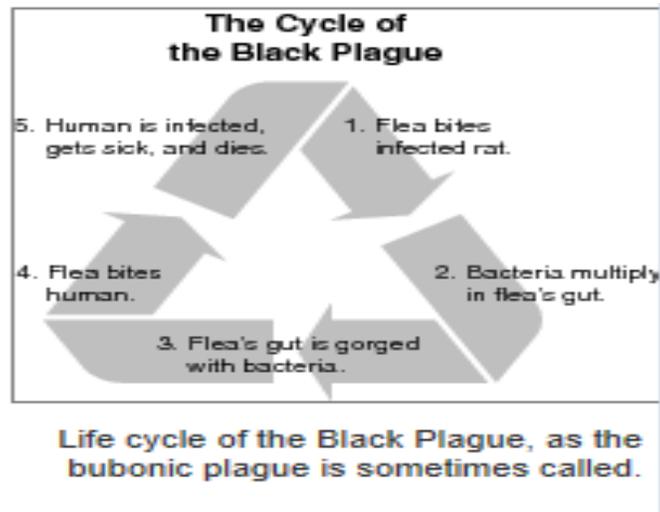


Figure 1. Cycle of black plague (Perlin and Cohen, 2002).

needed for a virus to break forth from its hiding cocoon (Poundstone et al., 2004). LeDuc and Peters (1999) were of the opinion that the case of the Ebola outbreak in the past years, has being quietly noted to be as a result of human interference in the wildlife scenario which transits to the fact that the reduction of human deeds in the wildlife activities will go a long way in reducing the effect of zoo bacterium or virus transmission as against the currently noted causes (LeDuc and Peters, 1999; Carroll et al., 2015; World Health Organization, 2016).

The paper attempts to trace the trend of the Ebola virus disease and its reaction among the citizens by comparing its movement like the first epidemic in existence using Nigeria as a study. In doing this, the role globalisation played in this blue scenario was not put on the side track but rather in the limelight with effects on business activities.

Background

The epidemic outbreak has its own interesting timeline in the history of mankind. Affirming a case to be the first cause or known outbreak is a herculean task but following the documented history of the ten plagues on the Egyptians according to the biblical records in the book of Exodus in the Bible (Exodus chapter 4-13) will be adopted. In reference to what we term as a disease, the plague of boils on all living things will be the first epidemic disease (Exodus 9 vs 9), using the medieval times as a record timing of epidemic occurrence, we could settle down for Chinese plague which was recorded in 224 B.C (David and Ann, 2002; Infoplease, 2015; Emond et al., 1977; Rodriguez et al., 1995; Rowe et al., 1999; Alexander et al., 2015) though the bubonic plague which is also known as the black death is regarded as one with the most significant outbreak which occurred in the

fourteenth century, precisely 1347 to 1352, with a tag of twenty-five million lives paying for it (Infoplease, 2015). This huge number of casualties must have caused trauma to the European continent during that era as David and Ann (2002) recorded that the plague affected both people and rodents. Rodents was identified as a transmitting line in the spread of the plague with the infection aided by infected human host helping to spread the plague via coughing, sneezing and close talking. This transmitting means mirrors the same way the Ebola virus disease spreads (David and Ann, 2002; Infoplease, 2015).

David and Ann (2002) stated clearly that the Black Death (an alias name that was adopted for the bubonic plague) actually originated from the republic of China. This was caused by the trading silk with the aid of the infested rats on the merchant's ships, recording the spread of a sad historic event. Daniel Defoe gave a graphically written illustration about the reign of the plague between the years 1664 to 1665 (Infoplease, 2015). The black plague disease is in sync with the Ebola Virus Disease in terms of transition, spread and occurrence. While the other was a virus, the latter was designated to be a bacteria, which is inactive until the rightful condition for its nurtured and growth are all in place (David and Ann, 2002; Shears and O'Dempsey, 2015).

Just the way the fleas harbour the bacterium for the black plague (Figure 1), the bats are the main host for the Ebola Virus (Bausch et al., 2007). The epidemic disease is deemed troublesome with the accepted facts that there has not been any globally accepted vaccine or drugs that could tame it, though recorded cases of survival has being noted along the time line (Ross et al., 2014; The Economics, 2014; Yakubu et al., 2016). Next is the adopted diagrams (Figures 1 and 2) shown to illustrate the similarity in the cycle of both diseases.

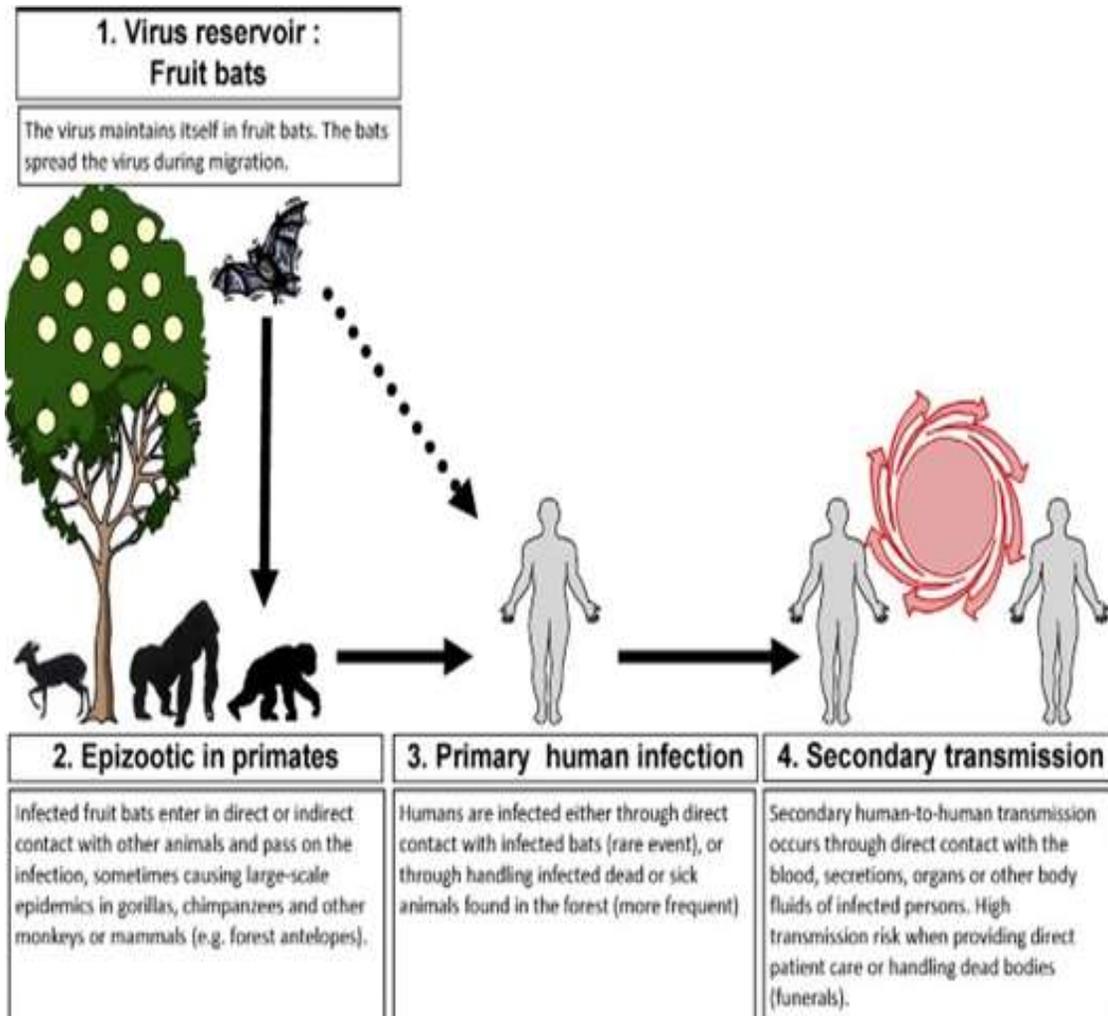


Figure 2. Transmission cycle of the Ebola Virus (Rodriguez et al., 1995).

The spread of the Ebola virus epidemic disease was aided via the tool of globalisation. This paper is designed to answer the length at which globalisation (in lieu with business activities) determines the balance for a nation's economy. The black plague came into Europe via the Chinese route, from China which can be likened to the adopted means Ebola virus disease entered Lagos, via the air route from Liberia. Thus, making it the first time such an epidemic enters Africa's largest populated country (Public Health England, 2014).

The objective of this paper is to access the level of awareness and knowledge of Nigerian regarding the cause, effects and treatments of the disease. However, specific objectives include;

- i) Examine how globalisation facilitates the spread of Ebola virus among Nigerians.
- ii) Investigate the influence of the Ebola Virus disease on Nigerian business activities.

Significance of study

The occurrence of an epidemic case endanger lives and cease a nation from existing. The paper traces the trend of the Ebola virus disease and reactions among Nigerians via online platform by comparing its growth and movement like the first epidemic that was in existence. In doing this, the role that globalisation played in this blue scenario was not put on the side track but in limelight. The expected role(s) that health workers were expected to play in the epidemic scenario was considered with relevance to the Nigerian government and populace in eradicating the virus with the knowledge of their lives on the line with little or no compensation. In lieu of this, the research is of importance to:

- i) The Government Officials
- ii) Health workers
- iii) Researchers

- iv) The populace
- v) Business owners.

Globalisation: Love and Hate

The need for globalisation cannot be simplified but due to its complexity proving more profitability in analysing when problems such as an epidemic disaster enters a community. Its necessity is being questioned (Troncoso, 2015). Such was the case with the Ebola virus disease with countries restricting flights from affected countries into theirs. Funny, these banned countries served as resource-draining pipes for the same nations who places restriction due to business convenience and good environmental report since internal business regulations are meant to thrive in these nations for foreign investors (World Bank Group, 2014).

During the turbulent times caused by Ebola virus disease, discrimination was believed to be the reasons why developed countries didn't want to give vaccines (though half finished, some school of thoughts believed that they should be sent to the affected countries) (Oleribe et al., 2015; Molokwu, 2015) as the this was not the case as when the reasons for the seclusion of personnel and other human interaction was immensely necessary (Alexander et al., 2015). It could be stated that the survival of the national interest was based on being a paramount issue against all other cases (Public Health England, 2014; Tambo et al., 2016).

Intruders: Who are they?

The Ebola virus disease has put researchers on their toes as to what could have triggered the current silent death giver for years to bear its fangs once more in the world without any restriction. Looking at the stage of transmission of the Ebola virus (reference to Figure 2), it an easy conclusion of who the intruder in the transmission circle was a man. Thus, a case of hygiene and curiosity that brought it out of it pit and transmitted via the four transmission stages namely:

- i) Escape from the host.
- ii) Transport to the new host.
- iii) Entry to the new host.
- iv) Escape from the new host (Society for General Microbiology, 2015).

In comparison with the way the United States political strata's intended to epidemic in lieu of it crossing over was the same view placed with the Nigerian political caucus (Fasina et al., 2015). This synchronizes with ideology that the responsible hand to blame in tackling crisis will be the political party sitting in the corridor of power which becomes the perfect football for the political

elites to use as a distraction for the masses to view their defects (Millman, 2014a,b).

Globalisation: Protagonist or antagonist

It is pertinent to note that Ebola virus entered Nigeria via an equipment called Airplane and its curbing was also ensured via telecommunication devices, thereby concluding both means are products of globalisation (Africa Independent Television, 2014). It is appropriate to state that the tools of globalisation are used to ill and bless nations depending on its utilisation. For days after its appearance, citizens were in doubt about the existence of Ebola Virus. The use of the internet and multimedia devices paid a major role in the circulation of the spread and deadly nature the virus possess (Ogundipe et al., 2014).

A look into the role globalisation plays in the Nigerian economy holistically; it is wrong to state that globalisation has whollistically aided the Ebola virus and not view its help in diminishing the effects sprung forth. Literatures gathered from scholars such as Ronald et al. (2011), Cartalucci (2014), Ezedike (2013), Freeman (2002), Ford (2009) have only aided in stating the double-edged sword possessed by globalization and its role in the government to deal with rewards that spring from it.

Punishment for impunity?

It is possible to attribute the adoption of a particular type of governance in a country to the role or extent that globalisation plays. The role of democracy in countries where practised makes it hard to curb the excesses of globalisation due to the norms that come with it. During the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, some of the populace assumed it was a government scam. This showed the failure of governance (Alexander et al., 2015). Those who survived the deadly epidemic are considered a threat on the confirmation that the male semen could be infectious three months after the being diagnosed with the virus (World Health Organization, 2014; Bausch et al., 2007). Truly, this reflection of the Nigerian health system in being weak and grossly mismanaged was displayed during the crisis but saved by the intrepid nature of the health practitioners, who brought safety and sanity into the country with their lives being the paid as price (Iroezindu et al., 2015).

Arising problems, finger pointing, next?

The human attitude deems it right to direct blame persons or institution when things go wrong and as a result blaming the un-alertness of the security personnel from Liberia for Patrick Sawyer entrance rather than solution providence which should be the next step such

as the occurrence of the Estonia cyber-attack by the Russians (Aborisade et al., 2014). Considering the reaction of the Liberian people to their government as a scam in response to the procurement of western aid it would be easy to see the failure that exists in the nature of governance enhanced by corruption (Jerving, 2014).

With this lack of trust, the capital of Liberia, Monrovia experienced a wildfire of the spread of Ebola virus disease based on the lack of trust leading to its description as the "Worry of the World" by Andrew Hoskins, medical international country director as it was the country with the worst condition in dealing with the virus (Jerving, 2014; Microbiology Online, 2015).

In words of Brecht Bertolt, the worst illiterate is the political illiterate (QwikGist, 2014), which refers to having a knowledge of political occurrence in one's nation is deemed important as it has crippling effects on every aspect of life.

The stated cost by pharmaceutical companies on the development of drugs or vaccines transcends to billions of dollars which should not be a limiting factors for countries such as Nigeria with the financial muscle and entrepreneurs venturing in it but regulation of such monopolized market will definitely have an invisible barrier from allowing competition in the sector (The Economist, 2014; Ogundipe et al., 2014; Gallup World, 2014), with the level of distrust that exist amongst Nigerians and within the levels of government, it is a surprise that the people were swift to react and believe the potency of the virus, thus leading to its curbing (Tomori, 2015). Could this be a light at the tunnel for the country to thrive in actualizing her old savoured moments of being the giant of Africa?

The step to take in an epidemic situation is to search for a cure, possible eradication and future prevention which cannot be attained without the due involvement of the people and government (Formenty, 2014; Iroezindu et al., 2015). Jerving (2014) gave an opinion that Liberians are still being haunted by the failures of their past governance, which also reflects amongst the Nigerians with the only difference of the quick re-spawn of hope amidst a grandeur of failures basked in promises. With the expectation not expiring this hope, a negative response was displayed among the citizens in response to the awareness but sheer determination of the government made 13 infected person which amounts to 61.5% surviving the disease (Ogundipe et al., 2014), thus showing a stronger allegiance amongst the citizens.

The Nigerian business environment

The Nigerian business environment is known to be a lucrative playground as every problem is seen as opportunities for profit realisation. The case of the hand sanitizers which private and established entrepreneurs used to rack in millions within the few months of the Ebola virus disease outbreak is one of these (Dickson,

2009; Akinbogun, 2008). According to C.I.A (2016), Nigerian business environment has major strength amongst others in:

- i) Strong Banking and Financial Sector
- ii) Easy Provision of Medium and Long-Term Loans
- iii) Controlled Money Supply
- iv) Fast Growing Oil and Gas sector
- v) Fast Telecommunication Sector
- vi) Investment Opportunities for the Local Entrepreneurs and Foreign Investors
- vii) Availability of Young, Active and Mobile Labor Force
- viii) Potentials for Future Growth and Investment
- ix) Increased Competitiveness and Profitability in the Petroleum Market Globally.

With the above-stated strengths, her weakness surely exists and act as undermining her great potentials. The weakness as found in Akinbogun (2008) and Ahmed (2015) include:

- i) Lack of power supply, road networks, security setups and other infrastructure.
- ii) Lack of finance and capital resources.
- iii) Lack of information system, new technology, and scientific base.
- iv) Inability to diversify its markets.
- v) Inadequate internal resources.
- vi) Lack of managerial capabilities and leadership skills in its business environment.

It is acceptable to note that there are more risks of doing business in Nigeria and succeeding as an entrepreneur with the country being an unfortunate victim of the mismanagement, corruption, inadequate and dysfunctional infrastructure, weak leadership, and the lack of cohesion (Ahmed, 2015).

METHODS

Primary data was sourced through an online designed questionnaire to get an opinion about the virus in relation to globalisation, thus deriving the respondent's knowledge about the virus. With the use of survey monkey, an electronic tool, questionnaires were distributed to generate an opinion poll among Nigerians on online social platform (Facebook).

RESULTS ANALYSIS

The results established that large number of Nigerians were fully informed about the Ebola Virus with 87.18% and 89.4% showing the population knew what constituted the Ebola transmission. The response rate from the avoidance or reduce rate of prevention was not quite encouraging as it was tagged with 15.38% showing the population were carefree about its transmission and how to avoid it was 41.03% leaving a number with inability

reduce the Ebola case.

Further analysis into the result shows to a large extent that an average Nigerian would not spare his life to help an infected person even when given the right protective gears. This arose from the treatment meted out on the medical professional who laid their lives to curb the virus, thus showing that respect and non-monetary treatment gives the psychological impact (Aborisade et al., 2014).

A response of 76.32 and 89.47%, deems it right to assume the role globalisation played in the Ebola Virus disease (in terms of the transportation of the Virus into the country) which necessitated its being viewed as one of the major ills of globalisation.

A poll of 42.11% shows that the globalization effect is being viewed positively than negative, though 7.89% were indifferent and could possibly mean that they accepted that there exist positive and negative aspects of it.

Opinion that the government did not do enough to implement the right things to curb the Ebola virus was affirmed with the rating of 18.92% showing the government were not being effective. This was in conjunction with the report stated by (Aborisade et al., 2014; The Department of Health, 2014; Aljazeera.com, 2015) as the level of seriousness, thus calling for re-address on the path of the government on how they should respond to issues when they arise.

Different opinions opined that the government was not active in giving a quick and swift response to the Ebola virus epidemic in making its way into the country (Aborisade et al., 2014), the survey shows that the government responded to the situation.

A summary of the analysis shows majority of the respondents were adequately informed about the cause and effect of Ebola Virus even though yet to meet with anyone infected with the disease. On the stages of the virus in an infected person, full information was on the average while majority of respondent will not physically help an infected person even after the protective gears had been given.

Ascertaining that globalisation was responsible for the importation of the disease into the country created a mix feeling on tagging air transportation as an ill of a global economy, though every sector of the economy had benefited immensely from different globalisation policies.

On the non-parametric test, there is significant awareness in Nigeria regarding the cause, effects and treatment of Ebola disease (Appendix 1), while the respondent asserted that spread of the disease was significantly influenced by globalisation (Appendix 2).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study revealed that Nigerians are aware of the socio-economic benefits and ills of globalisation but the

ills could be prevented or managed, such as illiteracy level in the country in times of epidemic emergence, the government must employ appropriate medium to provide enlightenment in all strata of the economy in irrespective of political affiliation leading to efficient management of the virus in the country (Palmgreen et al., Shears and O'Dempsey, 2015).

From all ramifications, it could be said that globalisation is not bad but rather a blessing that ought to be controlled. The Chinese ideology says leaving the windows open, be sure the net, thereby preventing the mosquitoes fit well into the Nigeria sceneries. This is because with the aid of corruption, we have allowed all types of mosquitoes have their way into the country.

With this result, it is recommended that medical researchers invest in further research and work on a vaccine to avert another Ebola virus epidemic occurrence and at the completion of this paper, Liberia, one of the countries with the worst outbreak was recovering with three cases per day as against 91 cases (Agency Report, 2014) and having 3400 lives claimed by the virus.

This result was achieved with lives of medical volunteers with no room for complacency as a price and little or no compensation making it a case of true allegiance to one's country as a founding line in a true commitment. Drugs and vaccines, such as the Brincidofovir, Zmapp and the TKM-Ebola injection was made but the confidence on them coupled with the slow response by World Health Organization (2015) was not encouraging or probably due to world politics (Aljazeera.com, 2015; NAN, 2016).

The Redeemers University that kept developing the Ebola test kit during the crisis should be encouraged (Makinde, 2015), as it seems private researchers cannot be funded based on trust or corruption. Institutions should be aided via research funds and grants and not wait for another epidemic to unveil its evil intent again (Erdal and Mahmut, 2008; Burki, 2016).

However, this study recommends that all the health checks in all the entry points of the country should be sustained and residents of the country should maintain high level of hygiene which was practiced during the advent Ebola Virus in Nigeria and the government at all levels should continue to enlighten the citizen on any prevailing health epidemics in the World.

Figure 3 shows the relationship posited by Ebola Virus disease in the course of aspiring positive globalised relations which could be termed a system with and without possibly accruing to a risk of a contagious disease, thus creating mistrust and spread of ill-will amidst neighbouring nations feared to experience the next visible occurrence.

Prevention can be attained via indulging the idea of Tambo et al. (2016), which posits the need for Nigerians and other west African nations to strengthen the healthcare systems which can respond to the high level of responsiveness and capacity. Ayeni et al. (2015)

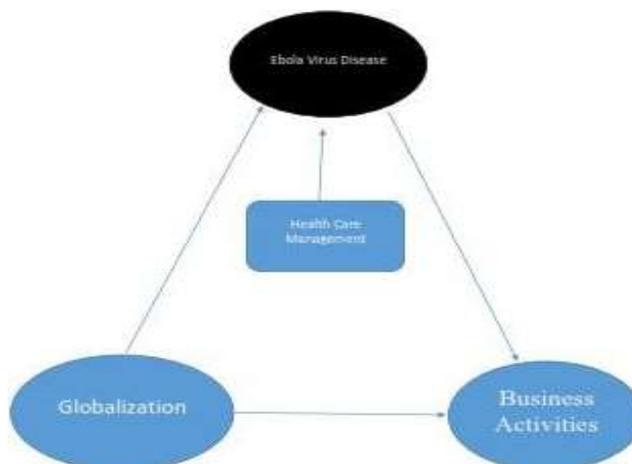


Figure 3. Author's representation of checks on negative globalized issues focusing on health with Ebola as a focus.

welcomes the idea of big data technology in preventing and controlling the Ebola virus disease while using the principles of cloud computing as safety net of operation in the health management system. Also, Owolabi et al. (2015) pinpointed the major problem with Africa as decentralized and uncoordinated data which ends up mystifying our engaged projects. There is a need to welcome the old ways of community participation which when combined with health education and deployment of effective novel diagnostic approaches will aid in early warning and surveillance of threats and emerging diseases (Kinsman, 2012; Tambo et al., 2016). This can be reprogrammed via the development of strategically measures in curbing the viral resurgence, persistence transmission dynamics, spread and accelerating vaccines regimen (immunization) development, which comes with implementation of restructuring plans in achieving sustained control, and eventual elimination in foreseen objective (Tavernise (2014; Fasina et al., 2015; Alexander et al., 2015; Carroll et al., 2015; Jasovský et al., 2016).

Another recommendation of this study is the collaboration of entrepreneurs in the health care system via international African Community. Obviously, the reason why African countries were affected by the epidemic and had to cry out to the developed nation for a solution was based on the reason that the financial muscle for research into the health sector is high with strained ability on any intended person(s) who wants to personally see it through. This suggestion is not in agreement with the view of Folayan et al. (2016) on the position that developed nations were obligated to contribute to strengthening of how health care system but in agreement with Buseh et al. (2015) on the disposition of having a private-public partnership though with reduced involvement of international communities.

The dependency of the African nation on the western continent to deal with issues such as health, war amongst

many others shows the inability to transcend the desired level of independence. We could compare it to a young man asking for freedom and wants recognition but collect daily stipends from his parents. It is in the best interest of all African countries to have a unilateral profit-oriented company that goes into the health-aid business. The organisation should be given the liberty to operate with little interference from any government and have her interest protected by them (all involved nations). This was also suggested by Yakubu et al. (2016) for the provision of institutional health care system as the cases of ethical challenges raise bars to health workers performance in their duties due to compensation being fully amiss when dealing with contagious disease in an apt manner. The suggestion of Iroezindu et al. (2015), also advocated by Oleribe et al. (2015) on the comprehensive strengthening of the Nigerian health system while owning the breeding problems will deviate from its currently weak and grossly mismanaged state and help in winning the war against less virulent infections.

Lastly, an adage says "*Health is wealth*" and thus when there is little or no health pandemonium, business is expected to thrive. In lieu of this, advocating towards preventive methods in epidemic matters is also a profit oriented measure while attaining strategic measures in achieving a sick free society via constant patronization from the governmental agencies and the society at large.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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APPENDIX**Table 1.** Friedman a) non-parametric and b) significance test results for hypothesis one.

Criteria	Mean Rank
Non-parametric test	
Q1	3.79
Q2	3.86
Q3	2.96
Q4	2.75
Q5	1.64
Test statistics	
N	38
Chi-Square	68.628
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

Source: Author's computation from SPSS 16.0.

Table 2. Friedman a) non-parametric and b) significance test results for hypothesis two.

Criteria	Mean Rank
Non-parametric test	
Q7	2.97
Q8	2.36
Q9	2.71
Q10	1.96
Test statistics	
N	35
Chi-Square	16.177
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.001

Source: Author's computation from SPSS 16.0.